

IMPOSTOR ROT209MI

A conversation with the fragments of oneself and a search for unity

THOMAS NOONE DANCE



In 2019 I premiered "After the Party" a solo that combined puppetry gesture and dance and have been touring this piece ever since. During these years dancing and performing with my puppet, I am constantly discovering not only an infinity of movement possibilities but also how delicate and subtle variation in the manipulation trigger surprising, tragic, and beautiful emotional responses from the audience. This has inspired me to continue investigating the integration of movement with puppets, and with the acquired knowledge take it to a different place, more abstract and subtly distinct from the line established in "After the Party".

Whilst performing I also became very aware of the object and the sheer aesthetic impact of André Mello's (the creator of my puppet) sculptures on the spectator. Not only do I find myself wanting to celebrate this aspect but I also find that the manner in which I move in order to manipulate and convey the puppet lead me to present my own body in a singular objective fashion that almost parodies the puppet itself. This "symbiotic" co-relation in turn dictates a vocabulary from which to create a new solo fusing puppetry and dance centred on finding a balance between dancer and puppet, establishing two beings yet merging them into a single entity.

MOTIVATION

Besides a purely mechanical or technical interest in moving with the puppet, there is also a conceptual interest concerning an internal dialogue, a conversation with an alter ego, imaginary or apparently real. In a post show conversation after the Rome premiere of "After the Party", the artist-sculptor, Maria Angela Piga, introduced me to a short story by Edgar Allan Poe from 1932 titled "Le Duc de l' Omelette," saying she was reminded of it by the performance.

Reading the story I began to consider the concept of a conversation with the devil, but almost immediately the idea broadened to examine what we consider our inner demons and how this internal dialogue could be made visible, examining who the alter ego that we address is and how it interacts with our self-perception. I also wanted to present the idea that there was no devil or third person and that what was being presented was simply a consideration or acknowledgement of ones flaws or the darker side of self.

Further conversations with other artists and colleagues also directed me towards the concept of non-dualism and the ways in which we perceive good and evil and this in turn led me to research my own Indian heritage and explore Shivaism. The most interesting aspect that came forward from this was the idea of contemplation and observation, something that reaffirms the concept of a meditative piece where the study of the struggle for balance is the goal in itself. And perhaps the intention is simply this, an illustration or portraiture, an observation without judgement, and a journey to find equilibrium or even peace.





THE OBJECT - PUPPET

I immediately wanted to work with both the deconstructed object as much as the whole and as such proposed the idea to Andre Mello, the puppet maker. Several concepts coalesced and led the discussion forward to the concept of a multi limbed, two headed modular puppet.

The aim of this object is to permit movement with the individual components such as arms, heads or the torso itself as well as the manipulation of the combined puppet. It will permit a precise control of the visual completeness of the puppet partner which allows the manipulator to play with the level of perceived animation in a more abstract manner than with a complete puppet.

At a simple visual level the puppet takes a humanoid form with the addition of animal traits and influences from Sanskrit myth, playing on the themes of androgyny and dualism that arose during the conceptual research. No direct reference will be made to any particular image as there is no intention to invoke specific mythology or form.

STAGE SPACE

I envisage this piece occurring in an imaginary space, intimate yet atemporal and undefined, and not requiring a decor as such but rather a light installation comprising of row upon row of LED strips hung over the stage. The light becomes the space, defining and delimiting, creating a myriad of different states and environments with infinitesimal subtle colour variation and movement within the light.

The concept of light as a set and setting is not a new concept in my work but an ongoing theme and that has been developing over several previous works (Less, Beneath, Medea). The idea of creating rich and evocative environments from an apparently empty space is a line that I hope to continue to pursue.

SOUNDSCAPE

Similarly the music I imagine as a cloak of sound from which melodies and rhythms emerge, paralleling the manner in which the puppet or my body transition from neutral state to become an apparently living thing and vice versa. The use of contrasts such as voice against electronic texture or real instrument against sound also become metaphors for the unfolding actions.

COLLABORATORS

Working alongside me in this project will be Alba Barral as choreographic assistant, Andre Mello creating the puppet-sculptures, Marc Lleixa designing light and Jim Pinchen composing the soundscape. Alba Barral brings her years of experience not only as a dancer with TND but also in recent years as rehearsal director, creative collaborator and external eye. Andre is a master craftsman

who created the puppet for the After the Party, an exceptional doppelgänger to Thomas Noone, as well as the fantastical animales of TND's recent children's show, "The Cat Who Wished to Change her Tale". Marc Lleixa contributes an extensive knowledge of LED light and mapping. Jim Pinchen habitually creates rich sound textures that fully understand and support the movement.



THOMAS NOONE is a dancer, choreographer, stage director and teacher. He has been in the world of contemporary dance for over 20 years creating and directing more than fifty works in alliance with musicians, set designers, dancers and visual artists. He has created works on all scales, for the stage and for the street, for adults and young people, working with film and live music and also branching out into puppetry and object theatre. After years of investigation into movement and how to share this passion with others, he has come to a practice called Conscious Reduction that has been developed with his Barcelona group. This tool has proven very useful not just for the company but also facilitates sharing ideas both with other professionals and for those who are not initiated in dance at all. His company is associate artist of the SAT! Teatre in Barcelona where he reciprocates collaborating as programming consultant for its dance program and seeking out other activities including projects of support for other dance artists in Catalunya and audience development in Sant Andreu.



ALBA BARRAL joined TND in 2006 as a dancer and has been a stable member of the company ever since. In the company she danced the work of Thomas Noone as well as working with choreographers Guy Weizman/Roni Haver, Ederson Rodrigues Xavier, Johannes Wieland and Jo Stromgren. Since 2012 she has also been part of the Camaralucida project, directed by Lautaro Reyes, and collaborates as a freelance with Marcos Morau's Veronal and DanceOn ensemble in Berlin.

In recent years she has also been assistant director for TND accompanying Thomas Noone in the creations of "After the Party", "Five Ways to Kill Time" and "La Gata" and in different workshops and activities linked to the company's pedagogical activity, including the Dancing Bodies project and the creative process "Stasis" for ESARTS.

JIM PINCHEN A talented multi-instrumentalist and electronic composer, he is capable of creating modern and contemporary soundscapes while integrating both real instrumental sound and urban textures. Jim combines his work as a composer with social cultural initiatives and is an active member of Musicians without Borders, with projects in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico and Santa Anna in El Salvador. Back in the U.K. he is very active in work with groups in risk of exclusion such as young offenders and refugees.

His extensive list of collaborations with Thomas Noone include Lugares extrañamente desastrosos, Brutal Love Poems, Medea, Just a Dancer, Breathless, Closer and After the Party, as well as creations for Noone for his pieces in Basel, Munster and Leeds.

ANDRE MELLO is a Brazilian sculptor who specialises in the creation of puppets. He worked as the art and puppet designer for the pioneer of dance object fusion Duda Paiva for over 12 years in the Netherlands before moving back to his native Brasil. He is incredible versatile and created not only the fantastically expressive puppet for "After the Party" with Noone but also the fantasy animals for his family show "The Cat Who Wished to Change her Tale".

MARC LLEIXÀ trained in image and sound before specialising in film art-image. He then began to work in lighting department of the Teatre Lliure Foundation in Barcelona since 2001 in Barcelona, and becoming head of that department in 2013. He creates lighting and audiovisual designs for artists such as Juan Carlos Llerida, Àlex Rigola or Xavier Alberti, and he designed the light for the Thomas Noone's puppetry-dance show "The Cat Who Wished to Change her Tale".

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VIDEO LINK

PARTNERS

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